

PRIORITY (Security Classification) FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : American Consulate General DHAHRAN

210
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 13, 1956

REF :

17 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION NEA-4 REC'D 6/18	DEPT. IN F C OTHER	Rmk-2 Olib P-1 4/0 P-1 EUR-5 ID-4 London-7 Cia 7 USIA 20 DCB1 Army-4 Jiddo-1 Kuwait-1
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SUBJECT: Organized demonstrators disturb King Saud on way to banquet at ARAMCO

Summary:

On June 9 King Saud was invited to a banquet at ARAMCO's Senior Staff Dining Hall in Dhahran. Earlier in the day persons on buses and in the company schools were reported to be passing word of a meeting to be held at 6:00 at the Labor Office in Dhahran. That evening about 200 workers gathered for the meeting and then moved to the main gate of ARAMCO's compound where they awaited the King's arrival from Dammam. They shouted slogans against the change from Company bus service to contractor buses and displayed a banner reading "Welcome to the King and Death to Imperialists and Traitors." They threw stones at some Americans who attempted to photograph them. When the royal cavalcade of cadillacs returned to Dammam the crowd shouted its slogan and the King stopped his car and sent two of his guards to seize a banner. His Majesty is reported to be disturbed by the occurrence of these disorders and to have discussed them critically with the Deputy Director of Public Security from the Eastern Province.

One of the activities arranged for King Saud during his recent visit to the Eastern Province was a banquet at ARAMCO's Senior Staff dining hall on Saturday evening, June 9. Such a dinner is normally tendered to the King and his party by the Company whenever the King spends a few days in the Dhahran area.

On the morning of June 9 ARAMCO Local Government Relations officers began to receive reports that there would be a meeting that evening at 6:00 at the SAG Labor Office located in the Dhahran General Workers Camp. Word of the meeting was being spread by people on the buses carrying ARAMCO employees, and some of the students at the Company's training schools were passing the information to their classmates. The exact nature of the message being passed reportedly varied. For example some people were told that the King had an important announcement which would be revealed at the meeting. Others heard that the meeting would agree on points to be included in a petition to the King which would be drawn up and delivered to His Majesty as he arrived at ARAMCO's main gate. A third variant was that the workers should gather at the Labor Office and then march to the main gate so as to make certain a large crowd would be there to welcome the King.

ARAMCO informed Amir Saud bin Jiluwi, the Governor of the Eastern Province, of

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these reports, and the Amir said he had heard the same rumors and had ordered the police to be on the alert.

At 6:00 p.m. a crowd of approximately two to four hundred assembled at the Labor Office and soon thereafter marched to the main gate of ARAMCO. Arriving there about 6:45 they arranged themselves along both sides of the road from Dammam, extending about as far as the first railroad crossing. Prince Muhammad bin Saud, who was in charge of arrangements for the royal party, came along the route from Dammam a little later to see that everything was in order, and members of the crowd told him "We are here to welcome the King." Sometime before the King's arrival at about 8:50, a large banner was displayed in the crowd by men at the end nearest Dammam, i.e., where the King would first see his throng of welcomers. The banner reportedly read "ARAMCO Saudi Workers Welcome the King. Death to Imperialism and Traitors." Before and during the King's arrival there were shouts, among them, "We are oppressed" and "We are not satisfied." "We want Company buses, not Blue Line buses." Some Americans who were there with camera to take pictures of the King through the compound's fence had a few stones thrown at them when they attempted to photograph the banner and the demonstrations. Otherwise the crowd is reported to have been orderly. Prince Muhammad commented to an ARAMCO executive that he was surprised by the shouting of slogans.

During the banquet the crowd outside the main gate continued to increase and reached a total estimated at 2,000. There are reports that one man moved about telling the people not to applaud when the King would reappear for his return to Dammam. The Deputy Director of Public Security, Abd al Aziz al Uhaydib, is also reported to have gone out and ordered the crowd to cease shouting and to keep better order. As the royal cavalcade of cadillacs departed for Dammam, the same slogans as before were shouted. There is also reported to have been some booing by the crowd. The King reportedly stopped his car briefly and ordered two of his Khuwiya (personal bodyguard of armed retainers) to go and seize a banner. They did so and the banner was taken to Dammam.

Later that evening the King summoned al Uhaydib and, according to one ARAMCO source, "gave him a hard time" because of what had happened.

No other demonstrations of this type during the royal visit except a small gathering of workers who collected at Dammam during an inspection by the King of an ARAMCO housing project are known to have occurred. They proffered a petition and the King drove past them and then sent a member of his party back to inquire what they wanted. The King's emissary accepted the petition which apparently requested a pay increase and objected to the shift to contract buses.

Comment:

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On the occasion of previous long visits to the Eastern Province the King has sometimes chosen to announce some new benefit or popular measure for the workers. He has not done so this time, and one ARAMCO source commented that he thought the King would feel that such a gesture now would encourage further agitation.

For the Consul General:

Grant V. McClanahan
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Consul

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